

Volunteers to Advisors:
A reflective study of leadership, education and change in
a Third Sector organisation.

Submitted by Mirinda Carmen Crespi to the University of Exeter as the thesis for the degree of *Doctor of Education in Education*, September 2011

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Abstract

This thesis explores how I have taken steps to improve my practice of leadership as a Chief Executive within a Third Sector Drug and Alcohol Support Service and to build professional identities for volunteers in the service. I studied how volunteers' identities changed from that of 'Volunteer' to 'Advisor' and what I learned about myself as a leader. I noted the value of studying my own reflections as a leader and how change became embedded throughout the organisation as a consequence. As a result of this process, I developed a mnemonic that I consider to encapsulate key aspects of leadership. This is entitled 'CAVEAT' and identifies competency, visibility, empowerment and a therapeutic orientation as important qualities of a leader in positions like my own.

The study is informed by in-depth focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, personal reflections, questionnaires and surveys. It provides recommendations for Chief Executives of Third Sector organisations involved in leadership and the professional identity-building of a volunteer workforce in an era of outcome-based commissioning.

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